

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BOGOTA 11708

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC CASC PINS CO
SUBJ: STARR KIDNAPPING; MEETING WITH VILLAMIL

1. SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL IN BOGOTA, MRS. JENSEN EXPRESSED DESIRE TO TALK WITH VILLAMIL. THE LATTER READILY AGREED TO SEE HER AND THEY HELD MEETING LASTING ONE AND A HALF HOURS LATE YESTERDAY DURING WHICH SORZANO SERVED AS MRS. JENSEN'S INTERPRETER.

2. VILLAMIL WAS HELPFUL AND COURTEOUS THROUGHOUT; HOWEVER, THEIR CONVERSATION GOT OFF TO A BAD START WHEN VILLAMIL COMMENTED THAT IF RICHARD STARR WERE REALLY A CIA AGENT HE WAS LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY THE FARC. THIS NATURALLY ALARMED MRS. JENSEN BUT SHE ARGUED FORCEFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY THAT HER SON HAD NO ASOCIATION WHATSOEVER WITH CIA. VILLAMIL'S MOTIVES FOR RAISING THIS ISSUE ARE UNCLEAR BUT HE SEEMED CONVINCED BY MRS. JENSEN'S REMARKS AFD HIMSELF OBSERVED THAT THE FARC WOULD HAVE KILLED STARR LONG AGO IF THEY THEMSELVES BELIEVED THEIR PUBLIC LINE ABOUT HIS BEING AN INTELLIGNECE AGENT.

3. VILLAMIL SHOWED SYMPATHY FOR MRS. JENSEN AND EXPRESSED DESIRE TO ASSIST HER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE TRAVELLING TO HIS FARM IN THE FARC AREA AROUND

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JAN. 2 AND OFFERED TO TRY TO "SOFTEN" THEM. VIALLAMIL SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT A PRISONER EXCHANGE DEMAND (ABOUT WHICH HE HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE) COULD NOT BE MET AND THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO A RANSOM AGREEMENT. HE SAID HE ALSO WAS WELL AWARE THAT MRS. JENSEN HAD LIMITED MEANS. HE ADVISED HER UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO MAKE A SPECIFIC RANSOM OFFER AND AFTER MRS.

JENSEN GAVE HIM A FRANK PICTURE OF HER LIMITED ASSETS, VILLAMIL SUGGESTED SHE OFFER THE SUM OF 300,000 PESOS (THIS IS APPROXIMATELY US \$8000.) VILLAMIL SAID HE THOUGHT SHE COULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE A COUNTERPROPOSAL FROM THE FARC.

4. VILLAMIL ALSO OFFERED TO HELP MRS. JENSEN DRAFT A LETTER TO THE FARC IN TERMS WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD HAVE THE BEST CHANCES OF LEADING TO A REASONABLE AGREEMENT ON THE RANSOMING OF STARR. ACCORDINGLY VILLAMIL AND MRS. JENSEN TOGETHER CAME UP WITH A TEXT (BEING SENT SEPTEL) WHICH WILL BE DELIVERED TO MANCHOLA ON SUNDAY DEC. 18 AS PREVIOUSLY PLANNED. MRS. JENSEN HAS TWO SMALL PACKAGES FOR HER SON SIMILAR IN CONTENTS TO THE ONES SHE HAD MADE UP PREVIOUSLY. VILLAMIL SAID THAT HE WOULD TAKE ONE OF THESE WHEN HE RETURNS TO HIS FARM AND GET THE FARC TO PASS IT ON TO RICHARD. MANCHOLA WILL BE ASKED TO TAKE THE OTHER PACKAGE.

5. VILLAMIL ALSO ASKED THAT MANCHOLA BE TOLD ON DEC 18 THAT HE WANTS TO SEE HIM FOR THE PURPOSE OF ARRANGING A VISIT TOGETHER TO THE FARC BASE.

6. WHILE IT WILL APPARENTLY BE A NUMBER OF WEEKS BEFORE VILLAMIL GETS IN TOUCH WITH THE FARC DIRECTLY, HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THE FARC IS UNLIKELY TO CARRY OUT BEFORE THATTIME ITS THREAT TO MAKE ITS DEMANDS FOR A PRISONER EXCHANGE PUBLIC.

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HEBELIEVES THAT THEY WILL WAIT FOR A REPORT OF THE DEC. 18 MEETING AND THAT THIS IS WHY THEY HAVE NOT PUBLICIZED THEIR DEMAND SO FAR.

7. VILLAMIL SAID THAT HE WAS INSTALLING A SHORTWAVE RADIO AT HIS FARM WITH WHICH HE WILL BE ABLE TO COMMUNCIATE WITH HIS HOUSE IN BOGOTA. HE PLANS TO CALL HIS NEPHEW HERE AT THE HOUSE FROM HIS FARM NEAR NEIVA ON OR ABOUT JAN. 10 BY WHICH TIME HE EXPECTS TO HAVE FARC'S RESPONSE TO MRS. JENSEN'S OFFER.

8. COMMENT: IF AND WHEN THE FARC MAKES A SPECIFIC RANSOM DEMAND, THERE WILL BE A PRESSING NEED FOR AN INTERMEDIARY TO CARRY ON THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR MRS. JENSEN. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE FOR HER TO DO THIS ALONE AND WE DOUBT THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE HANDLED EFFECTIVELY BY MAITREJEAN UNDER THE CONDITIONS HE REQUIRES. ACCORDIHLG, WE BELIEVE DEPT SHOULD NOW BE CONSIDERING MRS JENSEN'S HIRING OF A PROFESSIONAL INTERMEDIARY WHO WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO COME TO COLOMBIA WHEN REQUIRED, PRESUMABLY SOMETIME AFTER JAN. 10.

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